



Semaphore

The official Newsletter of the Georgia Sociological
Association

January 2022

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Letter from the President

Greetings!

I hope you all had a great Christmas break and are able to get back to SOME normalcy in your life!

The annual meeting was a huge success and new presenters from other disciplines were impressed by our friendliness and our rather large student population who attended! Thanks to all of you who brought your students!

We are now focusing on our next conference in November at Callaway Resort & Gardens (November 3-5, 2022). Be sure to put this on your calendar! More information will follow!

The rooms will be affordable for the students as well as faculty and other participants! As a student-friendly conference we will also look into offerings for the students to mingle and get to know each other! It is a great way to grow our membership and make sure that our profession has a future filled with bright sociological minds! What a legacy to pass to our future sociologists in Georgia.

Be sure to send Denise your news and accomplishments for the newsletter. Thanks again for such a great year and a terrific conference.

Happy New Year!

Pamela Pitman Brown
GSA President

A Note from the Past President

Dear GSA Community,

When I assumed the role of GSA President in November 2019, none of us could have predicted that a deadly pandemic will disrupt our livelihoods for so long. However, we had to adapt to unprecedented realities and continue our work to serve our students and communities of Georgia. It was a true honor for me to serve as the GSA President over the past two years that coincided with one of the worst global pandemics of the century. I was thrilled that we managed to deliver a successful and safe face-to-face conference that was attended by more than 100 participants on November 4-6, 2021, at Lake Lanier Lodge. After one year gap in 2020, it was obvious that we have missed our GSA colleagues and we could not wait to rekindle our connections and forge new partnerships in our professional association. I would particularly like to thank my wonderful colleagues on the GSA Executive Board who joined me in the planning of the conference. I could not have asked for better colleagues and stronger team spirit!

I am excited to pass the gavel to Pam Pitman Brown who will bring her contagious enthusiasm and energy to the leadership of our organization. I am looking forward to meeting you at Calloway Gardens in November,

Darina Lepadatu
Kennesaw State University

2022 GSA annual conference

2022 GSA Annual Conference: November 3-5, 2022

Callaway Resort and Gardens, GA



Located sixty miles Southwest of Atlanta, Callaway is a world away – with beautiful natural scenery, world-class amenities, and elegant settings. We have high hopes to deliver a safe and successful face-to-face conference in November 2022, following all the CDC guidance and regulations. More details to come in the Summer.

2021 Sociologist of the Year



Alyasah "Ali" Sewell (*they/them/their*) is Associate Professor of Sociology at Emory University and Founder and Director of The Race and Policing Project. Advancing quantitative approaches to racism studies, they assess empirical links between the political economy of race and racial health(care) disparities using policing and housing policy data. Published in a wide array of sociological and interdisciplinary outlets, their research garnered support and recognition from the National Institutes of Health, the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Baden-Württemberg Foundation, and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. Planned Parenthood named them, "*The Future: Innovator and Visionary Who Will Transform Black Communities*". They received their Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology from Indiana University with a minor in Social Science Research Methods and their B.A. *summa cum laude* in Sociology from the University of Florida with a minor in Women's Studies.

2021 Meritorious Service and Teaching Award

Meritorious Service Award Recipient:

Christy Flatt
Gordon State College



Teaching Award Recipient

Ravi Ghadge
Kennesaw State University



2021 Student paper awards

Undergraduate Papers

 First Place:
\$100

“Persistent Government Negligence Towards the Danger that Lead-Based Paint in Properties Poses to Children’s Health: An Analysis on how Persistent Negligence Towards Poor, Colored Communities in West Baltimore Has Led People Like Freddie Gray to be Poisoned with Lead and Ultimately Suffer a Difficult, Short Life.”

Bryan Rocha
Undergraduate, University of North Georgia

 Second Place:
\$75

“Working Mothers: Penalty or Bonus?”
Renee Clement
Undergraduate, University of North Georgia

 Third Place:
\$50

Leveraging the Contact Hypothesis to Reduce Racial Bias
Sofiya Karimova
Undergraduate, University of North Georgia

Graduate Paper:


\$100

COVID-19: Undergraduate Student Perceptions on Social Networking Experience
Amy Boone
Graduate student, University of North Georgia

2021-2022 GSA Executive Board

New Executive Board

President Elect- Pamela Pitman Brown

Past President: Darina Lepadatu

President Elect: Carly Redding

Vice President: Brandon Attell

Members at Large:

1. Christy Flatt

2. Allen Hyde

3. Jewrell Rivers

Recording Officer: Devon Goss

Financial Officer: Michallene McDaniel

Semaphore Editor: Denise Woodall

Parliamentarian: Sara Mason

Scenes and Stories from the Annual Meeting

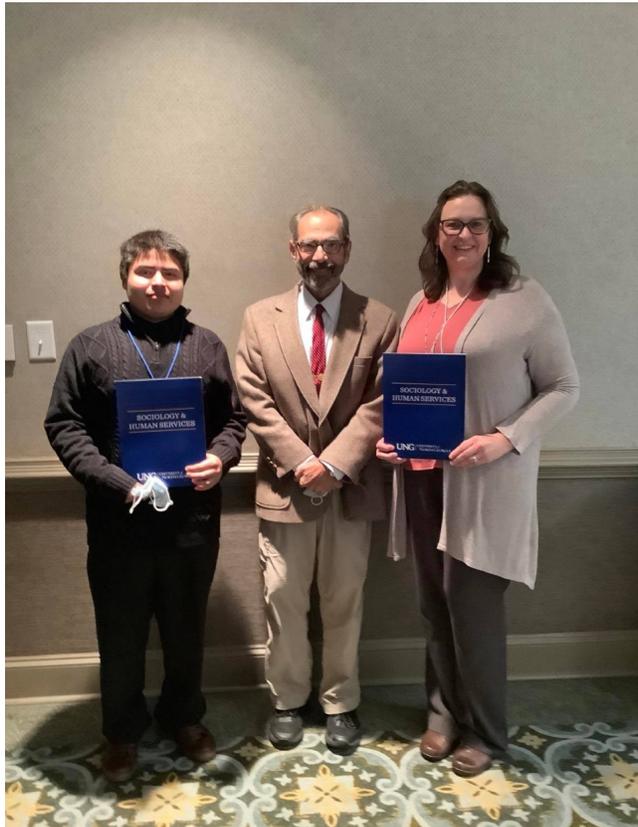


Our new president Pam Pitman Brown showed off her social issue t-shirts and illustrated for us how she incorporates them into her curriculum at Thursday's teaching workshop. She says, "There's got to be something that's visual. So, I'll wear a t-shirt that reflects what I'm teaching that day. I have them reflect on the topic and with the visual connection, it helps solidify the content."



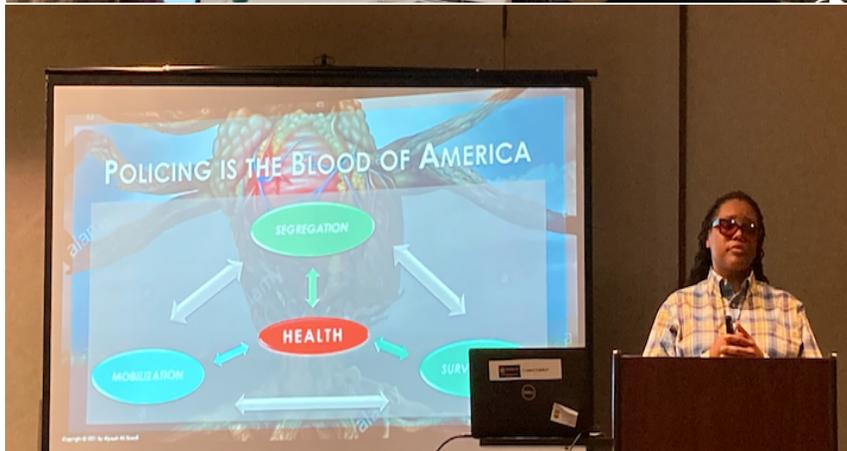
The importance of faculty mentorship to undergraduates is a recurring theme around GSA every year. Cassandra Jordan of Albany State University Sociology program coordinator shared her experience of being mentored by GSA's Teaching Member-at-Large, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's Jewell Rivers. Rivers was her professor at Valdosta State. Jordan says, "He introduced me to the discipline of Sociology, I didn't even know what it was as a young college student. He talked to me about what I could do and the type of jobs I could get. So, I changed my major to Sociology. Also, he was a listening ear when I was confused, and he's a big reason that I'm here right now." Rivers says the faculty-student relationship is so important and the GSA is a great way to facilitate them.

Kennesaw State University student mentor, Kaelyn Ireland, works with KSU's Interdisciplinary Sociology and Psychology Research Lab. Ravi Ghadge, Katherine White, other faculty and students came together to examine how people emotionally respond to instances of racism. The students who assisted on the project presented their work at GSA this year. Ireland says, "GSA is a wonderful opportunity for students to present, to network, and to learn what's out there for them." Alondra Guerrero and Avery Britt, KSU seniors, also presenting on the project, said that GSA was a way to get feedback on their work, to hear what others are doing, and to get the mentorship they need to prepare strong applications for graduate school. The team was excited to be in-person after a long year of mostly virtual educational participation.

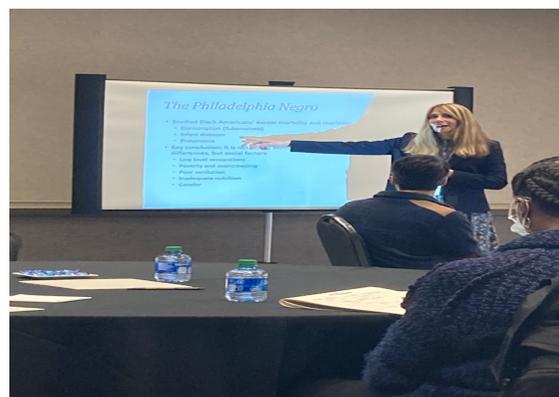


Bryan Rocha and Renee Clement, both of The University of North Georgia, the first and second prize winners at GSA 2021, stop for a photo with their sponsor David Broad, UNG.

Plenary Session Keynote “Negative Illness Feedbacks: The Sociopolitical Paradox of Police Brutality” Alyasah “Ali” Sewell (*they/them/their*) is Associate Professor of Sociology at Emory University and Founder and Director of The Race and Policing Project.



Dr. Linda Triber’s Bringing DuBois into Medical Sociology, Du Bois pioneered the concept of social determinants of health citing differences in excess mortality by race, gender, and class, yet his work is rarely considered in mainstream medical sociology. To understand structural causes of health disparities, it is necessary to revisit his work and introduce it to a new generation of sociologists.



Business Lunch,
Awards, and Plenary



The Gavel is Officially Passed!



The Sociological Dictionary Exercise: An Instructional Note

David Broad, University of North Georgia

We have typically been instructed in the use of the dictionary for the purpose of finding definitions, spelling, pronunciation, etymology and usage – things we don't know about a word. That instruction begins in early elementary grades. The sociological use of the dictionary is about looking up words that we DO know, for the purpose of finding differences between what we know and the official dictionary definitions. Here's how the sociological dictionary exercise works and what it can accomplish: first, we identify a word or list of words that are in common English usage and that we DO know. Then, before opening the dictionary, we write down the definition of the word as we know it. Then we look up the word in the dictionary. No matter how close our own definition is to the official definition in the dictionary, there will be differences – they can be small, but they should not be ignored. (Note: students will tend to minimize the differences, because they are motivated to be right, but it is precisely the differences that we are after!) The differences are accounted for by what symbolic interactionists have referred to as experiential associations – elements of our understanding of the meaning of a symbol that have been shaped by previous exposures and experience with the symbol. The two parts of every symbol are the shared associations, which are the meanings we have in common with other people of our culture, and for which the dictionary is the most reliable source, and the experiential associations which probably include the shared associations, but also have the unique personal sources of the pattern of our experiences which shape our mind, our self/identity, and ultimately our society. The dictionary exercise is a valuable tool for a sociologist and a useful pedagogical device. Once we have found a difference between the personal definition written and the dictionary definitions, we can ask “where did that difference come from?” When done numerous times, over an extended period, the differences between experiential associations and dictionary (shared) associations can reveal patterns, such as are created by social class, education, cultural background, gender, generation, and attitudes and values.

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The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology is the official journal of the Georgia Sociological Association. *JPPS* publishes refereed works of research and theory focusing on both public and professional sociology.

For more information, see our [Aims and Scope](#) page.

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